



PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE EXPRESS-NEWS

Dan Blagg has two of the largest paintings at the 'Images of Nature' exhibit, including this one of a pristine view of a full moon rising over Enchanted Rock.

'Images of Nature' exhibit paints a realistic picture

By Dan R. Goddard
Express-News Arts Writer

Art historian Alvin Martin and artist Charlene Rathburn have joined to open the Martin-Rathburn Gallery next to the Blue Star Art Space with a sprawling survey of landscape painting by more than 20 artists.

The Blue Star complex now has two blue-chip galleries, Martin-Rathburn and the Milagros Contemporary Gallery.

"We hope to use some of my contacts nationally and Charlene's to bring in well-known artists from other parts of the country," Martin said. "I'm interested in traditional forms of art — painting, sculpture — and a return to art's traditional values, such as good technique, solid composition and so on. But there'll be a contemporary edge to what we do."

One of the curators of the "Real, Really Real" exhibit of photorealism that opened the San Antonio Museum of Art, Martin has been an academic nomad who has taught at the University of Texas at San Antonio, Southern Methodist University in Dallas and, for the past five years, Whitman College in Walla Walla, Wash.

"Images of Nature: A New Romantic Spirit" features

mostly realistic landscape painting, which Martin says has become a new romantic movement. Martin sees links between the romantic revolution of the early 19th century and all the art of the 20th century, from social realism to environmental conceptual art.

"For the past several years a new interest in the depiction of natural forms and images has emerged in the art world," Martin said. "This has been accompanied by a more emotive and spiritual urge, which is similar to the earlier romantic spirit and drives the creativity of many contemporary artists."

From Austin, Dan Blagg has two of the largest paintings, including a pristine view of a full moon rising over Enchanted Rock. Austinite Katherine Brimberry is a founder of the Flatbed Press and pushes at the boundaries of fine arts printing in Texas with her stand of freshly planted fruit trees on gold paper. Artists from Dallas and Washington also are featured.

"Images of Nature" continues through Nov. 8 at the Martin-Rathburn Gallery, 132 Blue Star St., 229-9609. Hours are noon to 6 p.m. Wednesdays through Sundays.